

Ministry of the Environment

June 2009

ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008 HIGHLIGHTS

CHIEF DRINKING WATER INSPECTOR



Protecting our environment.

 **Ontario**

INTRODUCTION

Ontario's Chief Drinking Water Inspector's 2007-08 annual report informs people about the safety and quality of the water from their taps. The report provides statistics, for the period April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008, regarding inspections of drinking water systems, laboratories licensed to perform drinking water tests, and drinking water quality test results.

This Highlights document provides a summary of key results from the annual report. You can find the full report on the Drinking Water Ontario website at www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater.



Chief Drinking Water Inspector, John Stager

WATER QUALITY

High Performance Results

The 2007-08 performance results – and the consistently high quality results in the three previous years – clearly demonstrate the benefits of the drinking water safeguards that have been put in place.

LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

The government has taken strong action to protect Ontario's most vulnerable citizens from exposure to lead in drinking water. By implementing and monitoring the province's Lead Action Plan, the ministry and its partners are making an important contribution to drinking water protection. The ministry will continue to support local efforts to address lead in drinking water.



Overview of Drinking Water Systems Performance

1. Municipal residential drinking water systems

- 99.85% of drinking water tests met Ontario's strict drinking water standards
- These are large and small municipal residential drinking water systems that serve six or more private residences

2. Non-municipal year-round residential systems

- 99.40% of drinking water tests met the standards
- These are non-municipal systems that serve residential developments (six or more private residences) or year-round trailer parks or campgrounds with more than five connections

3. Systems serving designated facilities

- 99.39% of drinking water tests met standards.
- These systems serve children's camps, day care centres, schools or health care facilities.

CHIEF'S PERSPECTIVE: During 2007-08, based on more than 520,000 drinking water quality test results from municipal residential drinking water systems, 99.85% of the results met Ontario's strict drinking water standards. The consistent high water quality indicated by these test results can reinforce the public's confidence in the quality of their municipal drinking water.



2007-08 Lead Test Results

Round 1 of Community Testing (O. Reg. 170/03)

Results from December 15, 2007 to April 15, 2008

- 97.7% of plumbing sample test results from municipal systems and 97.7% of distribution samples met the standard for lead
- 99.1% of all plumbing sample test results from non-municipal year-round residential drinking water systems and 99.6% of the distribution samples met the standard for lead

Public/Private Schools and Day Nurseries (O. Reg. 243/07)

Results from private and public schools testing from June 15 to August 15, 2007 and day nurseries testing from June 7 to October 31, 2007

- 94% of the flushed samples taken at public schools, private schools and day nurseries met the standard for lead
- 80% of standing drinking water samples met the standard for lead

Flushing works - the lead concentration was consistently lower in drinking water samples that were taken after the system had been flushed.

INSPECTING DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS

The ministry's 2007-08 inspection program includes municipal residential and other regulated systems, including non-municipal year-round residential, and the various categories of systems serving designated facilities. All 697 municipal residential drinking water systems, which serve more than 80% of Ontario's population, were inspected to monitor regulatory compliance.

The ministry has a comprehensive, risk-based inspection rating process that provides a quantitative effective measure of the municipal residential drinking water systems' inspection results.



Inspection Results

Inspecting Municipal Systems - Results

- Of the 699 inspection ratings, half (50%) were rated at 100%
- 95% of the inspections achieved a rating of more than 90% in 2007-08
- 14 orders were issued to 14 municipal residential drinking water systems
- 3 orders were issued to 3 Local Services Boards operating non-municipal year-round residential systems
- The Ministry of the Environment once again fulfilled its responsibilities, under the Compliance and Enforcement Regulation, of inspecting all municipal residential drinking water systems.

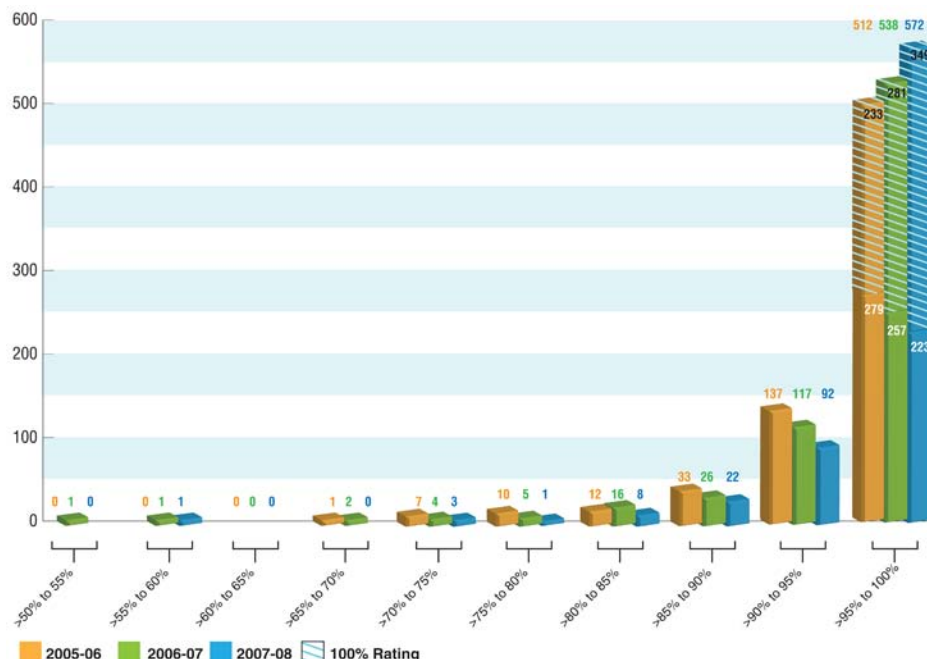
Inspecting Non-Municipal Systems - Results

- The ministry successfully undertook 84 inspections of non-municipal year-round residential drinking water systems and 112 systems that serve designated facilities
- 53 orders were issued to 43 systems as a result of these inspections.



CHIEF'S PERSPECTIVE: Generally non-municipal year-round residential systems and systems serving designated facilities are compliant with regulatory requirements, with some exceptions. The Ministry of the Environment continues to work with the systems that aren't compliant to ensure that they undertake all necessary actions to meet their regulatory requirements.

Distribution of Inspection Ratings



INSPECTING LICENSED LABORATORIES

Twice-yearly laboratory inspections are a key component of Ontario's drinking water safety net. Because drinking water is vital to public health, the ministry regulates how it is tested. During 2007-08, Ontario's laboratories licensed to perform drinking water tests analysed more than 650,000 drinking water samples from Ontario's drinking water systems.



Inspecting Licensed Laboratories - Results

- A total of 114 inspections at 56 of these laboratories were conducted, including 53 unannounced, 56 announced and five responsive inspections
- The ministry also carried out two inspection of unlicensed testing facilities
- Three orders were issued to three laboratories.



Chief's Perspective: The 2007-08 laboratory inspection program found that laboratories licensed to perform drinking water testing met the majority of the regulatory requirements. The ministry continues to work with the licensed laboratory community to address the mainly administrative non-compliance issues identified during the year.

CONVICTIONS



Highlights of Convictions for Drinking Water Prosecutions

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- 11* of the 19 cases involved 13 municipal residential drinking water systems and led to fines totaling \$157,000
- Four cases involved non-municipal year-round residential systems, resulting in fines totaling \$44,000
- Four cases involved systems serving designated facilities, leading to fines of \$13,900
- There were no convictions involving laboratories licensed to perform drinking water testing.

* Includes two cases with convictions against three individual operators and one conviction against an operating authority with fines totaling \$22,500



Chief's Perspective: The ministry continues to work with its drinking water partners to overcome areas of non-compliance. In the meantime, drinking water consumers can be confident that, when serious violations occur, action is taken which could include pursuing the matter through the court system.

During the period between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2008, there were 19 cases involving convictions related to drinking water systems, resulting in fines of \$214,900.

The Chief Drinking Water Inspector welcomes feedback on this Highlights document, the full annual report, and welcomes any comments and ideas for future directions for the report. The Chief can be reached at drinking.water@ontario.ca.

You can find the full report on the Drinking Water Ontario website at www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater.

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